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Nixon and Cuba

Why Vice President Hits Hard At Kennedy's Position on Castro

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EN ROUTE WITH NIXON isphere is violently opposed— in Pennsylvania, Oct. 24—Vice President Nixon obviously but lose it at home. thinks he has a winning issue in the Cuban question. He hit it hard today at every stop along the blazing yellow and scarlet valley of Shenandoah, but it is not at all certain that this is a one-way proposition.

News
Analysis

Mr. Nixon has the spirit of the law on his side. Articles 14 and 15 of the Inter-American Treaty specifically forbid any intervention, political or economic, with the internal affairs of any of the American republics, and by suggesting United States aid to the anti-Castro forces, Senator Kennedy is clearly in violation of the spirit of the law.

But in the anti-Castro mood of the nation the Democratic nominee may have the spirit of the American people working with him. And in an election debate before a majority of the voters, the spirit of the people may be more important than the spirit of the law.

This country is obviously disturbed about the spread of Communist influence into the Caribbean. No foreign issue since Korea has provoked so much anxiety. The polls show it. The letters columns are full of it, this is usually the first foreign policy question put to the candidates wherever they go.

Accordingly, it is a near question whether the country will prefer the Vice President's policy of putting limited economic pressure on Castro or the Senator's suggestion of increasing the economic pressure and cooperating with those who want to bring Castro down. Mr. Nixon has the spirit of international law on his side but he had the spirit of the people on his side. He lost the argument abroad but he probably won it at home.

The opposite may be the case in the Cuban debate. The Vice President could easily win the argument abroad—he will certainly win it in Latin America. Where any suggestion of United States intervention in the hem-

isphere is violently opposed— but lose it at home. It is possible, of course, that Mr. Nixon can demonstrate, as he tried repeatedly to do today, that Senator Kennedy's suggestion of aid to the anti-Castro forces would encourage Soviet military intervention in Cuba and lead to war in the Caribbean. With this prospect in mind, he advocated a more cautious approach.

Favored Bold Policy

But even this is not a sure argument. For Mr. Nixon has not been arguing for a cautious but for a bold policy toward the Communists everywhere, even in Quemoy and Matsu, within artillery range of the Communist China coast.

His major point in the foreign policy debate so far has been that we must oppose Soviet expansion wherever it appears, that we must not give up "one inch" of territory to the Communists and that we must risk war if necessary to prevent the conquest of Quemoy and Matsu.

In short, he has seemed willing to risk war 7,000 miles from home, where, in the harbor of Amoy, the strategic considerations are highly unfavorable to the United States, while opposing the risk Senator Kennedy would take in Cuba, where the strategic situation is highly unfavorable to Premier Khrushchev.

Nixon Paradox

The element of paradox in all this is even more apparent when Mr. Nixon's suggestions for dealing with Castro are studied. He proposed last Friday night that the United States should deal with Castro as it dealt with the Arbenz government of Guatemala, and now probably in for another big, bushy debate involving not only Cuba but Guatemala and the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency, and a lot of other things that could well be left unsaid.

Nevertheless, he could lose the debate on substances and win the battle for votes, but in the end the chances are that the country would not gain anything.



In the Valley

MURRAY KEMPTON

Morning for Richard M. Nixon was at 8:30 in the real America of Life and Look and The Ladies' Home Journal with the man from The Reader's Digest bowing like a waiter at his back.

The Vice President began his day in New York at a breakfast of the Magazine Publishers Association enduring the acid bath of cross-examination by Henry R. Luce and Elliott V. Bell of Business Week.

The grand inquisitor was Edward Weeks of The Atlantic Monthly. "We will open the heavy artillery with Mike Cowles," said Mr. Weeks.

And Gardner Cowles of Look fixed Richard Nixon with his glittering eye and expressed regret at having to ask tough questions at this hour of the morning. But what did the Vice President "feel is happening in Red China?"

Mr. Nixon apologized because he had only the information available to CIA, which did not seem to him visibly superior to the Luce underground.

Red China has a very dedicated, aggressive leadership. Communist. There is a basic difference between Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Mao Tse-tung, although "in using these two names, incidentally, I am not trying to downgrade other Chinese Communist leaders who may be more influential or as influential as Mao Tse-tung." Khrushchev believes in following the line of peaceful competition. There is ideological competition between the two. But any "obvious" attempt on our part to drive them apart would be counterproductive because they have a religious tie. "It has been my position—and will continue to be in the future until circumstances change—that we would make a very great mistake to change our position on recognizing Red China."

This ringing declaration having been roundly applauded by all the inquisitors, including Mr. Cowles, Elliott Bell asked about the proper role of government in a recession.

The Vice President did not wince at the savagery of this shot but bravely fired back that the proper role of government is to watch carefully, and spend money carefully, and use the credit functions very imaginatively and the tax device. "These are the devices I would use, one, to anticipate recession, and, second, to fight it as you get into it and as you get out."

It went on through this relentless give-and-take past the allotted television time, without Henry Luce having a chance to get in his licks; the Vice President gallantly agreed to allow 10 more minutes for this ordeal.

"I thought," said tiger Luce, "I might ask a question which would give you a chance to say something that hasn't been covered. What," he went on, "is your grand strategy for winning the battle for freedom without war?"

"It is a question of quality . . . It is a question of understanding what we are fighting for . . . We have got to get some idealism into our people . . . A reorganization of all the activities that deal with this non-military struggle . . . The Vice President of the United States reporting directly to the President and then on a day-by-day, week, month-by-month basis, fighting this battle aggressively."

And Mr. Luce applauded, and the audience rose and Richard Nixon went off. He gathered up his Pat, who had been at breakfast with the Republican ladies downstairs—in the America of Richard Nixon, Abraham Lincoln works the ballroom and Mary Todd the breakfast suite—and bidden farewell by Jinx Falkenberg and George Murphy, and with Nelson Rockefeller as warer, they set forth to the trackless wastes of Queens.

At the Long Island City Courthouse there were 400 people. At Rego Park, a policeman said that he had been told to prepare for 5,000 people. "Give 'em a break," he said, "and make it 900."

Nelson Rockefeller opened his mouth and said: "In this cru—all right now, kids, let's have a little quiet over there—here at the crucial hour, we who cherish America . . ."

Richard Nixon talked about a cause greater than any party, great as America itself. The applause came from the core at the speakers' stand, on the sidewalks the majority looked on faintly curious but heavily unmoved. A wise man in the audience observed that at moments like this, when Jack Kennedy knows he has nothing to gain, he bites it off and moves away, but that Nixon stands there hammering it in with an insistence at once desperate and soggy.

There was a moment later in the afternoon when his car slowed down driving through Jamaica, and someone came to shake his hand. He was encouraged to stop the car. The sidewalks were crowded; the streets were clear for the access of worshippers, but none of them crossed and he moved on.

It was a day by no means typical; Tuesday had been better and today will be better; Nixon is unlikely to face such wastes on another day in the campaign. But the gods chose a peculiarly unfortunate time to give him a dismal occasion.

For he is tired, and looks unhealthy, and depression sits upon him like a cloud. He looks like a member of the lower middle class out of work. For the moment, the momentum has passed from him. There is a sense, not so much that he has slowed down, but that Jack Kennedy has speeded up.

He has done his work, he has avoided mistakes, but he is beginning to feel the weariness of those who do not have natural talent and who must run against men who have. He is commencing to feel a deficiency in magical powers. He is a resourceful man and he is likely to rebound. But for the moment, yesterday, there was no comfort for him even in the America of The Readers Digest; riding through the America of Queens, he could feel the peak behind him and the valley under his feet, and the next peak dimly distant.